(555)

P760079-2421

May 27, 1976

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your May 6 letter to the Secretary regarding the access which defense lawyers and family members have had to Kim Dae Jung and other prominent political and religious figures presently on trial in the Republic of Korea.

On the basis of informal enquiries, our Embassy has provided the following background information on this matter.

Since his arrest on March 8, Kim Dae Jung has been seen five times by lawyers. The first two interviews by three members of the defense team took place just prior to the first and second trial sessions on May 4 and May 13. The most recent interview took place May 20. In addition, Kim Dae Jung has also been seen individually by one New Democratic Party lawyer.

The ten other defendants who have been imprisoned with Kim Dae Jung since their arrest have been seen twice by selected lawyers from the defense team just prior to the two trial sessions. The seven defendants who have been indicted without detention have free access to the defense lawyers.

The Embassy understands that no technical limit is placed by the prison authorities on interview length. However, two prison guards are present at each meeting, one of whom takes notes and, after one hour, the guards indicate that time is up. The interviews thus far have ranged from one hour to one hour twenty minutes.

With respect to family visitation, ten of the eleven defendants in prison have been visited twice by a wife or mother since their arrest. One Catholic priest who does not have close relatives has not had a family visit.

Honorable Donald M. Fraser, Chairman
Subcommittee on International Organization
Congress of the United States
Washington, D. C. 20515

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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Family visits took place in two phases shortly before the two trial sessions. The first phase spanned April 23, 29, and May 1; the second phase May 11, 12, and 14. Family members have been called to visit in groups of three to four on successive days.

Only one visitor is permitted and the visit time is limited to one minute. Visits take place in a small room seated at a table with two uniformed prison guards and one plain clothesman present and taking notes. Only conversation about personal and/or family matters is permitted.

More generally, I would note that, as in the case of Kim Chi Ha, a senior Korean member of the Embassy staff has attended the sessions of this trial and will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

GW

Robert J. McCloskey
Assistant Secretary for
Congressional Relations

Drafted:EA/K:JDForbes:jdb
x 29330 5/24/76
Clearances:EA - Mr. Habib
H - Ms. Swift

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